

# Budget

American

families have to balance their checkbooks and live on a budget - the Administration and Congress should too. Unfortunately, in recent years we have seen a return to deficit spending and the accumulation of the largest deficits in the history of this nation. In 2006 alone, the federal deficit was nearly \$250 billion, not counting billions more borrowed from Social Security.

I have

fought against these deficits and voted to cut wasteful spending, improve government efficiency, and restore balance to the federal budget. I have also insisted that we put an end to borrowing from the Social Security trust funds and that we put common sense budgeting rules in place to restore fiscal responsibility to the federal budget process.

I understand the demands that are placed on our nation during times of war, but we cannot shy away from our duties to keep expenditures level with income, and we must not pass huge deficits and debts onto our children. I believe it is irresponsible and immoral to shift today's costs onto the backs of our children and saddle them with enormous, growing debt. This should not be a partisan issue. We must all work together and make the tough choices to get our financial affairs back in order.

## Cutting the Deficit

The federal budget is in dire straits. When President Bush took office in 2001 the federal budget was balanced, with surpluses expected for years to come. Since then, we have squandered surpluses of over \$3 trillion and racked up record deficits. Congressman Baird has fought the reckless spending and tax policies that put our country deeper in debt. While the Bush Administration and Congress have continued to pass trillion dollar tax cuts for the wealthy few in the face of growing deficits, Congressman Baird has spoken out against the fiscal mismanagement gripping Washington D.C. He has called on his colleagues to adopt common sense budgeting rules to keep the federal budget in balance and has offered amendments in the Budget Committee to restore fiscal responsibility to Congress. Congressman Baird has also formed a working group of members of the Budget Committee to develop realistic solutions to balance the federal budget.

## Social Security

Social Security is a promise our government made to the American people and we must ensure its future. In recent years we have heard a lot of talk about placing Social Security trust funds in a "lockbox". Unfortunately, this so called "lockbox" has been raided and borrowed from to mask record deficit figures.

In 2005 alone, borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund exceeded \$150 billion. President Bush's most recent budget proposal calls for borrowing more than \$1.2 trillion from Social Security over the next five years. More than anything else, it is this borrowing that has put Social Security in jeopardy.

Congressman Baird has taken a stand against this practice, insisting that budgets provide accurate numbers and honestly represent any proposed borrowing from Social Security. More importantly, the Congressman has cosponsored legislation to end borrowing from the Social Security Trust Fund entirely. This legislation would prohibit the Administration and Congress from borrowing from Social Security to fund other programs or disguise the true size of the deficit.

## Cutting Down on Waste, Fraud and Abuse

Congressman Baird is a staunch advocate of eliminating waste and fraud in government programs. He has used his position on the Budget Committee whenever possible to identify and eliminate unnecessary spending. For example, after reading an article in the Battleground Reflector, Congressman Baird called for an investigation of the Livestock Compensation Program (LCP). The program, which may have been well-intentioned, was subject to flagrant abuse and was wasting taxpayer dollars.

At the instruction of Congress, the Department of Agriculture created the LCP to compensate ranchers and farmers for losses stemming from natural disasters. Unfortunately, as Congressman Baird learned, the government had failed to require recipients to demonstrate any actual financial loss before receiving payment. As a consequence, livestock owners who lived in a disaster area, but who sustained no damage to their animals, nonetheless received payments as high as \$40,000. Congressman Baird talked with the Department of Agriculture and the House Committee on Agriculture about his concerns. Partly in response to his efforts, this faulty program was not reauthorized and was instead replaced by a system that is much less vulnerable to fraud.

Congressman Baird has also worked to ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely in Iraq and not subject to fraud by government contractors. He introduced the Stop Fraud in Iraq Act to update the False Claims Act, a law that allows whistleblowers to sue government contractors suspected of fraud. The False Claims Act has been used to bring dozens of charges against Iraq contractors suspected of fraud, including Halliburton's subsidiary, Kellogg Brown and Root. However, a loophole in the False Claims Act that allows the Administration to stall the

process has prevented pending Iraq contractor fraud cases from moving forward. Congressman Baird's legislation will close this loophole and protect U.S. taxpayers by ensuring that contractors in Iraq suspected of defrauding the government are held accountable.

Congressman Baird also led the effort in the House of Representatives to extend the term of the Special Inspector General for Iraq Reconstruction (SIGIR). The SIGIR serves as a critical watchdog over the billions of U.S. dollars allocated for Iraq reconstruction programs.

## Closing Tax Loopholes

Congressman Baird doesn't believe the federal government should give taxpayer dollars to U.S. companies that locate overseas to avoid U.S. taxes, labor laws, or environmental protections. Baird has voted to close the "Bermuda Tax Loophole" that allows U.S. companies to set up shell companies overseas to shelter money from the IRS. He believes that relocating to a foreign country to avoid paying U.S. income tax is inconsistent with American corporate citizenship and unfair to businesses that pay their fair share in taxes. Congressman Baird also believes that government contracts should not go to companies that dodge their own responsibilities and locate overseas and has voted to prohibit contracts with companies taking advantage of the "Bermuda Tax Loophole."

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